

The range of this species according to the Handbook of British Birds is 'N. E. Palaearctic and N. Nearctic regions. Breeds in arctic E. Siberia (Wrangel Islands and Tchutchki peninsula) and in arctic N. America from Pt. Barrow, Alaska to Southampton Is., Baffin Land and islands northward. Replaced by larger race *atlanticus* apparently in N.E. of N. America. Winters in western states of U.S.A., especially California; casual in E. Canada and U.S.A.; also south to Japan on E. coast of Asia; accidental in W. Indies. In Europe reported from Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, ? Holland, France, Greece, ? etc., but probably in many cases merely albinos.'

Mr. George Nedou has very kindly presented this skin to the Society.

114, APOLLO STREET, FORT,  
BOMBAY,  
10th May 1950.

EDITORS.

### 17.—GEESE AND DUCK ON THE CHILKA LAKE, ORISSA

Further to correspondence on the above subject published in your issue of April 1949, we have compared notes and think the following brief summary may be of interest to some of your readers.

#### *Geese*

When E.C.B. visited the lake at Christmas 1949, the geese in the Nalban area appeared to consist of approximately 2/3rd Grey Lag and 1/3rd Bar-head, but at Satpara where he estimated the number of Bar-head to be about 1,500, he was unable to detect one single Grey Lag among them after a most careful scrutiny on the ground when they were very tame or in the air when they were decidedly the reverse.

From observations made by L.A.C. over the past three years he finds that the Bar-heads are not to be found on Nalban till the middle of December, but by the middle of January are as numerous as the Grey Lag. When he visited the lake on the 10th December 1949 there was not a single Bar-head seen but a week later they were there in small numbers and out of a total of 30 geese bagged, 6 were Bar-head and the remainder Grey Lag. The following bags of geese made in the Nalban area may be of interest.

—	L.A.C.			E.C.B.		
	White Front	Grey Lag	Bar-head	—	Grey Lag	Bar-head
31- 1-45	...	...	...	31-1-45	...	1
3- 1-46	...	...	3	31-1-46	...	7
8-12-47	...	14	...	31-1-47	...	3
12-12-48	...	23	1	.....	...	...
8- 1-49	...	10	15	X'mas 49	...	6

The immediate conclusion is that the Grey Lag arrive first, the Bar-head come in just before mid-December and by the end of the year numbers tend to even up with a preponderance of Bar-head in January. It would be interesting if other readers confirm this.

### *Duck*

As regards the various species of duck, E.C.B. has not noticed any particular variation in numbers of Pintail. With this L.A.C. does not entirely agree. This season many more Pintail were seen than during the previous two seasons.

The Gadwall is the commonest species and because of their unwary behaviour when on a line of flight, form a high percentage of the bag.

Shovellers are, of course, ubiquitous and Wigeon very numerous, though more wary than the Gadwall.

Common Teal have always been scarce but Garganey are always numerous.

A few Spotbill and Red-crested, Tufted and Common Pochard in varying numbers are usually found. During his two visits to Nalban in December 1949, L.A.C. observed large numbers of Tufted Pochard leaving the island at the first signs of dawn. Unlike the other duck, which were content to remain on the pools on the island if undisturbed, the Tufted Pochard had all left by sunrise.

Lesser Whistling Teal occur but not in the large numbers subsisting in most Orissa jhils such as Balagai near Puri. The Large Whistling Teal which occurs with the Lesser in such places has not been seen by E.C.B. or L.A.C. at Chilka.

E.C.B. has no record of Nukta, Cotton Teal or Mallard on the Chilka Lake, though the two former are very common some 20 miles away at the Balagai jhil, where Tufted Duck (Pochard) and White-eyed Pochard occur in varying numbers during different years. L.A.C. records having shot 3 Cotton Teal on Nalban island on 19-2-27 but does not remember having seen any in recent years.

Brahminy duck are numerous. L.A.C. saw what he estimated at not less than 15,000 in the Naupara area during December 1948. In 1946 E.C.B. saw several small parties of Sheldrake of which one was shot. He has not noticed them in any other year. In January 1948 a party known to L.A.C. shot six and record having seen at least 200. Two were bagged out of a flight of 25-30 birds. In December 1949 L.A.C. saw a flock of 4 Sheldrake and a solitary bird amongst five or six Brahminy.

The earliest L.A.C. records having seen migratory duck on the Chilka is the 19th September 1929 when he bagged 12 Pintail and 10 Garganey during the evening flight on the mainland near Balugaon. The birds were shot as they came into the ripening paddy from the lake.

CHARTERED BANK BUILDINGS,  
CALCUTTA-1,  
1st February, 1950.

E. C. BENTHALL  
L. A. CRAVEN